DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 554 CG 016 054

AUTHOR Buerkel-Rothfuss, Nancy L.; Yerby, Janet
TITLE Two Studies in Member Perceptions of Family Communication. Part I: Perceived Similarity in Intergenerational Communication Style. Part II: A Factor Analytic Study of Family Communication Patterns.
PUB DATE Oct 81
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council on Family Relations (Milwaukee, WI, October 13-17, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavior Patterns; College Students; Communication (Thought Transfer); Factor Analysis; Family (Sociological Unit); *Family Life; *Family Relationship; Higher Education; *Interpersonal Relationship; Modeling (Psychology); Models; *Parent Influence; Systems Approach
IDENTIFIERS *Communication Styles

ABSTRACT

Similarities between parents and children have been of interest throughout history, but little work has been done in the area of communication similarities. To study the intergenerational continuity of communication style, the first of two studies examined the correlations between certain readily-identifiable aspects of parental communication style and the child's perception of his/her own use of those same behaviors. Subjects in both studies were two independent samples of college students (N=196 and N=369). Correlations were significant for virtually all pairs. Only two exceptions were noted: "looking on the bright side" was not positively associated between mother and child nor was becoming angry for no apparent reason. In the second study, a factor analytic investigation of specific dimensions of family behavior described in a family systems model provided support for viewing families as establishing themselves along a continuum, depending on their distance-regulating behaviors. (JAC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED218554

TWO STUDIES IN MEMBER PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION

PART I: PERCEIVED SIMILARITY IN INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION STYLE

PART II: A FACTOR ANALYTIC STUDY OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

Nancy L. Buerkel-Rothfuss, Ph.D.
Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts
Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48859

Janet Yerby, Ph.D.
Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts
Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48859

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Council on Family Relations, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October 1981.

CG 016054

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Nancy Buerkel-Rothfuss

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

OVERVIEW:

The variables which consitute a family's communication are multiple and complex. Communication is the process which forms and structures the relationships within the family system, the self-concepts of individuals within that system, and the interaction patterns which characterize that system. In short, communication--verbal and nonverbal--performs a role for the family system which is both critical and unique to a family's functioning and to maintenance of the system over time. Family communication can be investigated from a number of theoretical perspectives: symbolic interaction, rules theory, structural-functionalism, constructivism, and systems theory, to name a few. For the purpose of this paper, we have approached the family from a systems framework (Bertalanffy, 1968; Boulding, 1968) to examine two of the many constructs related to family system communication: communication "styles" and communication "patterns."

The "styles" a family uses in its ongoing pattern of interaction involve communication behaviors which are repeated and generalized by individual members in the family in similar situations. These behaviors mesh to create "styles" of conflict management, showing affection, making decisions, competing for power, and so on. In some families, for example, conflict styles involve harsh words and physical confrontation. In other families, conflict may involve withdrawal or attempts at creating guilt feelings in others. Each family system is unique, but stylistic strategies persist within family groupings and across time.

The "patterns" a family employs refer to the means by which families work to satisfy family needs and move the family system toward its goals. "Patterns" refer to system characteristics, whereas "styles" refer to relationships within that system. Interrelationships between communication styles among members create family "patterns" which typify a family communication system. In some families, the communication patterns evolve so that the system is open to influence from outside the system and individual members interact freely within and without the system boundaries. In other families, the system is more closed to the environment, more reluctant to allow members access to information and interaction from outside of the system boundaries. In still other systems, the family pattern is one of "organized chaos" in which each family member agrees to fail to coordinate activities with every other family member, thereby coordinating a need to be "out-of-synch."

The studies presented in this paper examine the two constructs just described. In the first, we examine the relationship of perceived communication styles between mother-child and father-child, as perceived by the child. In the second, we attempt to categorize family systems using an instrument based on the theoretical distance-regulation model presented by Kantor and Lehr.

PART I -- PERCEIVED SIMILARITY IN INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION STYLE

Introduction. Similarities between parents and children have been a source of concern, amusement, pride and trauma throughout history. Each day, parents receive vicarious reinforcement and suffer vicarious failure through the accomplishments and failures of their children. Similarly, children boast "That's my Mom!" or secretly worry that their friends will discover the truth about a parent's drinking problem. But how much are parents really similar to the children they have raised? How much do children really incorporate from their parents' interaction styles into their own lifestyles?

Although it seems intuitively obvious that some characteristics are likely to be shared across two or more generations in a family, research in this area has been limited. To date, researchers have examined a number of issues related to intergenerational similarity, cross-generational bonding, developmental stages in intergenerational closeness, and the "generation gap." Unfortunately, almost no work has been done in the area of communication similarities.

In particular, research evidence suggests that parental political leanings influence those of their children, at least initially (see, for example, Angres, 1975; Bengston, 1975; Tedin, 1974; Thomas, 1971; Thomas and Stankiewicz, 1974; Troll et al., 1969); that religious attitudes are likely to be similar across generations (Acock and Bengston, 1976; Jennings and Niemi, 1975; Kalish and Johnson, 1972; Thomas and Stankiewicz, 1974); and that work and achievement needs tend to be congruent (Acock and Bengtson, 1976; Bengtson and Starr, 1975; Hill et al., 1970; Troll and Smith, 1972). Also with regard to attitude transmission, researchers have examined parent and child attitudes toward aging and death (Kalish and Johnson, 1972) and marijuana use (Kandel, 1974).

Investigations in the area of family violence and child abuse have demonstrated fairly conclusively that individuals who display aggressive behavior toward a spouse or child were victims of such abuse at the hands of their own parents, suggesting an intergenerational link (Gelles and Straus, 1978). This link between parental behaviors or parenting style and resultant problems in their offspring has been documented elsewhere in the clinical literature (schizophrenia, mental illness), in literature pertaining to juvenile delinquency and crime, and in the area of substance abuse.

In the communication realm, a number of books based on case studies with one or two families suggest that identifiable communication similarities exist in ethnic families, rural families, and working-class families (see Rubin, 1976; Cohler and Grunebaum, 1981). Bernstein's work on restricted and elaborated codes (1973) seems to suggest that communication style is handed down from one generation to the next within families in some recognizable form. Likewise, researchers looking at the parent-child relationship and at parenting styles seem to be suggesting that "parent talk" has a profound influence on development of "child talk" (see Walters, 1976; Schachter, 1979), and on the development of the overall parent-child relationship (Ainsworth, 1979; Cohler, 1975).

In an effort to examine intergenerational continuity of communication style, the first study examined the correlations between certain readily-

identifiable aspects of parental communication style and the child's perception of his or her own use of those same behaviors. In particular, we were interested in whether or not nonaffiliative behaviors such as placing blame, name-calling, and making others feel guilty would be reflected in the respondent's perception of his or her own tendency to use or avoid those communicative strategies. Our basic goal was to determine whether or not perceived parental communication behaviors ("positive" and "negative") would correlate with perceived personal communication behaviors ("positive" and "negative"). And, as a secondary question, we looked at the degree to which "negative" parental strategies were negatively associated with the respondent's self-concept and the degree to which "positive" behaviors were positively associated with self-concept evaluations, given the assumption that self-concepts are formed and maintained by communication from significant others such as parents.

Method. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-five statements, each illustrating a specific communication behavior. In the first section, subjects were asked to describe their perceptions of their mothers' communication style, using those 25 likert-type items. In the second section, respondents repeated the process, this time for fathers' communication. Of these 25 statements, three were primarily affiliative/positive behaviors: "respects my feelings, even when we do not agree;" "is a good listener;" and "takes the 'blame' when she/he is wrong." The other twenty-two items described behaviors which we considered to be nonaffiliative/negative, including the following: "nags;" "makes others feel guilty to get her own way;" "exaggerates;" "makes excuses;" and "says things to hurt me in moments of anger, such as reminding me of my shortcomings or past mistakes." (See Appendix A for a complete list of items).

Also included were two hypothetical situations, one for mother and one for father, and a series of possible parental responses. Once again, these possible responses were categorized as being primarily positive ("would she...understand that it was 'just an accident' and forgive you?") or negative ("would he...deny that he had made the promise in the first place?").

Nineteen similar items were provided for the respondents' evaluation of their own communication style. All of the above scales were scored using a five point, likert-type scale and the following response categories: never, seldom, sometimes, usually, always.

The final set of questions asked the individual to "classify yourself with regard to each of the following" using a five-point semantic differential scale and the following variable pairs: intelligent/dumb, dependent/independent, clever/dull, shy/outgoing, clumsy/poised, confident/anxious, responsible/irresponsible, follower/leader, sexy/unsexy, inferior/superior, competent/incompetent, accepted/rejected, attractive/unattractive, and self-satisfied/dissatisfied with self. These fourteen items were summed to create a self-concept index for each respondent.

Subjects were students enrolled in a basic communication course in a large southern university. Subjects were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were asked not to include any identification on their answer sheets. The total sample of data collected resulted in an N=196 for the correlation analyses performed.

All correlations presented are zero-order Pearson Product-Moment

correlation coefficients. Because data were collected from individuals, information about parental communication is necessarily perceived style. All data were analyzed using the SPSS computer program, version 8.0.

Results. Table 1 presents the correlations between respondent communication style and perceived mother and father behaviors for the nineteen items common to all three groups. The first three entries--respecting feelings, listening and accepting blame--represent the three "positive" categories of behavior. The next fifteen items were all considered to be "negative" behaviors, and the final statement--"looks on the bright side"- refers more to an attitudinal state than actual communicative behavior.

As predicted, correlations between perceived personal behavior and perceived mother and father communication are significant for virtually all pairs tabled. Only two exceptions emerge: looking on the bright side is not positively associated between mother and child, nor is becoming angry with no apparent reason. In all other cases, the association between parent and child is significant at least the $p \leq .05$ level, with most reaching the $p \leq .001$ level.

Tables 2 and 3 present the correlations between indices of "positive" and "negative" behaviors plus some communication strategies included on the questionnaire for parents but not for the child. Also included are measures of parental self-concept created by summing two likert-type items: "is a very confident person" and "thinks highly of himself/herself."

As would be expected from the earlier analyses, positive and negative clusters of behaviors correlate significantly between respondent and perceptions of parents. Also significant are the correlations between the hypothetical negative behaviors (taken from the responses to the hypothetical situations) and both positive and negative respondent communicative behaviors. Included on these tables are two separate categories of communication not yet examined: verbal aggression (cursing, yelling, swearing, using sarcasm) and physical aggression (hitting, slapping, spanking). Although verbal aggression appears to be positively associated with negative personal behaviors and with personal use of verbal aggression, as expected, this index does not appear to be negatively associated with the positive cluster of respondent behaviors. Physical aggression appears to be similarly related, with the exception of the significant correlation between the father's tendency to use such strategies and the tendency for the subject to rate him/herself negatively on the self-concept index. Finally, it appears as if a positive perception of each parent's self-concept is positively associated with affiliative/positive communication behaviors and negatively associated with nonaffiliative/negative communication. Interestingly, father influence appears to be consistently related to the respondent's self-concept, but only one category of mother behavior is correlated near a significant level.

Discussion. We recognize that a common criticism of two-generational research conducted by collecting data from only one of those generations is that evaluation of the nonparticipants is likely to be flawed by the respondents' somewhat biased perceptions of those individuals. Indeed, one would not expect a child's perceptions of a parent's behaviors to correspond perfectly with actually observed behaviors. A second criticism

TABLE 1

Correlations of Self w'th Mother Communication and Father Communication

	MOTHER	FATHER
respects feelings	.24***	.25***
listens	.20**	.21**
takes the blame when wrong	.17**	.26***
nags	.26***	.14*
makes others feel guilty	.16**	.24***
makes excuses for mistakes	.23***	.26***
blames others for mistakes	.30***	.23***
exaggerates	.23***	.16*
teases	.24***	.21***
says things to hurt others	.22***	.26***
calls others names	.28***	.38***
gets angry for no stated reason	.07	.18**
finds fault with others	.26***	.12*
rubs it in	.21**	.28***
makes promises and fails to keep them	.32***	.28***
yells	.21**	.32***
swears	.31***	.36***
uses sarcasm	.40***	.43***
looks on the bright side	.00	.12*

*** $p \leq .001$
** $p \leq .01$
* $p \leq .05$

TABLE 2

Correlations: Perceptions of Mother Communication Behaviors with Personal Perceptions and Self Concept.

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	VERBAL AGG	SELF CONCEPT
positive behaviors	.38***	.21***	-.17**	.04
negative behaviors	-.12*	.44***	.36***	-.05
hypothetical negative behaviors	-.22***	.29***	.38***	.01
verbal aggression	-.02	.34***	.43***	.00
physical aggression	-.03	.12*	.11	-.11
mother's self concept	.16**	-.17**	-.05	.09

*** $p \leq .001$
** $p \leq .01$
* $p \leq .05$

TABLE 3

Correlations: Perceptions of Father Communication Behaviors with Personal Perceptions and Self Concept

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	VERBAL AGG	SELF CONCEPT
positive behaviors	.33***	-.23***	-.22***	.17**
negative behaviors	-.08	.43***	.35***	-.20**
hypothetical negative behaviors	.13*	.32***	.24***	.01
verbal aggression	-.01	.37***	.46***	-.16**
physical aggression	-.07	.15*	.15*	-.15*
father's self concept	.28***	-.12*	-.06	.08

*** $p \leq .001$
** $p \leq .01$
* $p \leq .05$

of this study could also be the intensely personal and threatening nature of the questions. It would certainly not be considered "socially desirable" to admit that one "always," "usually" or even "sometimes" makes a practice of finding fault or name-calling or saying things to hurt others. It is precisely because of the two "problems" just mentioned that the findings herein are likely to be especially significant. Clearly, individuals do not act on "actual" events; they act on their interpretations/perceptions of events. The most warm and loving mother who is perceived by her children as cold and uncaring will not make a more positive impression on those children than will an actually cold and non-caring parent. Similarly, a parent who is abusive and neglectful may be perceived by his or her children as a caring/loving person. Whether or not the ACTUAL behaviors are positively associated between parents and child, the results of this study suggest that those behaviors are PERCEIVED to be quite consistent, at least from that child's point of view.

As for the personal and threatening nature of the questions, it is probably the case that correlations between perceived negative parental behaviors and perceived personal behaviors is actually higher than reported here. In this case, the social desirability effect serves to make the findings reported more conservative than they probably are.

The exploratory nature of this study needs to be emphasized. Clearly, more items of a "positive" or affiliative nature should be included in a future version of this study; in its present form, the questionnaire is heavily weighted toward the more "negative" types of communication. As is always the case, more precision could be used to specify the nature of the behaviors described. In addition, separation of the sample studies by sex would be appropriate, given the literature which suggests that children are more likely to be influenced by mothers than by fathers and that daughters tend to be more strongly influenced than sons (Cohler and Grunebaum, 1981).

Despite the problems, it is clear that a link exists between a person's perception of how his or her parents communicate and the strategies that person uses to communicate with others. Future researchers will want to begin to examine WHY this is the case so that we can provide some useful information to the parent who was recently heard to complain: "My mother always did that to me and I swore I would never do it to my own children, but I did it anyway..."

PART II -- A FACTOR ANALYTIC STUDY OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

Introduction. The findings reported in the first part of this study offer compelling evidence which suggests that children assume many of the characteristics of their parents' communication style as they themselves move into adulthood. To a significant degree the findings confirm what people who have worked with families in counseling and therapeutic contexts have experienced. Adult family members tend to engage in the familiar behaviors of their parents in spite of the frequently expressed desire "not to make the same mistakes" of one's parents. (Satir, 1967). One might describe this process as one in which one generation functions as a transmitter of communication behaviors to the next generation. Current systems theory about

families suggests, however, that the process is very likely more interactive and that family members tend to exert mutual influence over one another. Family systems theorists describe the family as composed of interdependent members whose collective behavior is rule-governed and whose central function is the processing of information within the system and between the system and the environment. From a systems perspective, communication behaviors are not so much transmitted from parents to children but are reinforcers of patterns in the system. In the second phase of this study, our intent is to investigate aspects of family behavior which emerge from family interaction and communication patterns. More specifically, Part II of this study is a factor analytic investigation of specific dimensions of family behavior described in the family systems model of Kantor and Lehr.

Kantor and Lehr (1975) have developed a complex family typology for categorizing family systems according to distance-regulating communication patterns. The underlying assumption of their work is that all families are adaptive, structurally open to outside influence, goal-directed entities who behave in a purposive manner. Persistent patterns of communication and operation serve to differentiate one family system from another. Three enduring family types were identified: open families, closed families and random families.

> The three basic types are based on three different homeostatic models. Each is a variant of the generalized concept of family as a semipermeable system...In the closed family system, stable structures....are relied upon as reference points for order and change. In the open family system, order and change are expected to result from the interaction of relatively stable evolving family structures....In the random system, unstable structures....are experimented with as reference points for order and change. (p. 116-119)

The main activity of a family is thought to be the regulation of distance among itself and between itself and the environment. Families are information processing systems and information about distance regulation is carried by the family's communication. Through communication, a family maintains its territory and regulates the degree and kind of physical and emotional closeness of its members. It is this spatial metaphor -- families as distance-regulating systems -- which forms the foundation for the Kantor and Lehr model.

The distance which families regulate includes not only regulation of physical spaces among family members but regulation of psychological space as well. Examples of distance regulation include the extent to which members are expected to maintain aspects of their selves separate from the family, the degree of emotional expressiveness and closeness among members, and the kinds of information which may be brought into and/or permitted to leave the system.

Of central concern to Kantor and Lehr are the strategies families employ as they manipulate certain resources in order to get at certain targets. In essence, their schema for describing family types is based on

six dimensions of family behavior. Members of a family gain access to desirable target states of affect, power, and meaning through the ways in which the family manipulates space, time, and energy.

Affect refers to the way that intimacy, nurturance, and caring are manifested in the family. Power refers to the degree of freedom family members have to decide what they want and the ability they have to get it. The meaning dimension includes the family's philosophical framework which provides it with an explanation of reality and which defines the identity of its members. Values, attitudes, and beliefs about the self, others, and the world are included in this dimension, as well as the extent to which such meanings are shared by all the family members.

The family's manipulation of space includes such things as traffic control--how family members come together to share the same space for common of overlapping activities. It also includes how the family manages its territory, screens information and persons coming into the family, maintains the separate identities of members without deserting each other, and orients itself toward privacy. The way a family manipulates time has to do with the establishment of routines, the management of overlapping or out-of-phase schedules, the availability of members to one another, and orientations toward the past, present, and future. Examples of the family's manipulation of energy includes such things as the intensity of involvement in encounters and the choices the family makes in expending and recharging its energy.

Kantor and Lehr have based their model on observations and experiences in working with families. There has been no attempt, however, to develop an instrument which could be used to assess behavior among a larger sample of families along the dimensions and types described by the Kantor and Lehr model. The factor analysis reported in this part of the study was conceived of as an exploratory effort in that direction. One of the goals of this research is the eventual development of an instrument which can be used to identify family orientations toward the six dimensions conceptualized in the Kantor and Lehr model. Such an instrument would provide the researcher interested in family communication with an opportunity to investigate relationships among family patterns and a vast array of family-relevant variables -- including perceived similarity in intergenerational communication style. A more fundamental goal of the research is to provide information concerning the extent to which Kantor and Lehr's model can be validated by the self-report measures of individual family members. That is, will perceptions of subjects' family communication strategies reflect a structure congruent with the Kantor and Lehr model?

Method. The items which were developed to reflect the Kantor and Lehr dimensions of family behavior consist of thirty-four likert-type statements to which subjects are asked to respond on a five step strongly-agree/strongly-disagree scale. Each item is a sentence intended to reveal an orientation toward one of the six access and target dimensions. Orientations to various dimensions -- time, for instance -- were constructed to include each of the three family types.

Subjects were students enrolled in a basic speech course in a large mid-western university. Because of the intimate nature of the information gathered, subjects were assured of the confidentiality of their responses

and were asked not to include any identification on their answer sheets. The total sample of data collected resulted in an N=369 for the factor analysis performed.

The specific procedure employed in the factor analysis was principal factors, orthogonal rotation to simple structure using the varimax criterion, achieved through the SPSS computer program, version 8.0.

Results. The analysis performed produced a four dimensional factor structure, the results of which are reported on the following page. Each factor produced at least three items with a loading greater than .50 on the identified factor and less than .20 on any of the other three factors. The total variance accounted for by all of the four factors was 31.8%.

The first observation to be made about the results of the analysis is, of course, that the factor structure which emerged did not reveal items clustered within each of the family types. Statements reflecting open, closed, and random orientations are included among all of the factors.

Some consistent patterns do emerge, however, which made labeling and identifying the underlying construct of each factor a relatively easy task. Furthermore, each of the four factors appears to reflect a specific theme relevant to Kantor and Lehr's spatial or distance-regulating metaphor.

The five items in the first factor, which we have labeled Togetherness, each include the phrase "together," "do things," and/or "we do things together." The behaviors in this factor may be conceived of as dealing with the central issue of family separateness and connectedness. The distance-regulating strategies here focus on the extent to which family members function together or apart from one another.

The second factor contains five items which we have identified as Rules about Going. The items include phrases which have to do with the extent to which family members "feel free," are granted "permission", and enforce "rules" having to do with venturing out or "going" outside the physical boundaries of the family. This factor, also, consistently reflects a concern with distance-regulation in the family -- with the freedom family members experience to move in and out of the physical confines of the family space.

The three items on the third factor are each intended to reveal open, closed, and random orientations toward personal space and focus specifically on the parents' monitoring of children's mail. We have named the factor Informational Privacy. The factor deals with the right of family members to keep secrets, to not share aspects of themselves with other family members, and to claim the privilege of exerting control over how much other family members need know about specific aspects of their lives. Once again, the factor supports the distance-regulating function of family communication strategies.

The final factor included three items which we have labeled Territorial Privacy. Two of the items refer to the children's rights to enter their parents' bedroom while the other one includes the phrase, "privacy of our home." In this factor, as in the other factors, a specific spatial orientation -- in this case territorial rather than

TABLE 4

FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR KANTOR AND LEHR DIMENSIONS OF FAMILY BEHAVIOR

Factor*	Item	Factor Loading
I: Togetherness 12.6% of Variance	1. We seldom do things together.	.70
	2. We seldom eat together.	.69
	3. Mealtimes change frequently to accomodate schedules, but we try to get the whole family together.	-.59
	4. We rarely set a time to do things.	.54
	5. We always do things together and go places together.	-.73
II: Rules About Going 8.6% of Variance	1. My parents make the rules and the children obey them.	-.58
	2. I am free to go where I want with whom I want so long as that doesn't interfere with someone else's plans.	.64
	3. My parents give permission to go only certain places with certain people.	-.64
	4. Rules are decided upon through discussion and negotiation.	.51
	5. I'm free to go where I want with whom I want no matter what.	.75
III: Informational Privacy 5.6% of Variance	1. My parents would never read my mail.	.80
	2. My parents would read my mail only if I said it's okay.	.74
	3. My parents feel free to open letters addressed to me.	-.78
IV: Territorial Privacy 4.9% of Variance	1. We can go into my parents bedroom when we want to.	-.53
	2. We express affection often but only in the privacy of our home.	.60
	3. We never go into my parents bedroom.	.69

*Total Variance for All Four Factors: 31.8%

psychological space -- is reflected in the construct with which the items are concerned.

Discussion. As we have indicated in our report of the results of the analysis, each of the factors focuses on some aspect of distance-regulating in the family, confirming the Kantor and Lehr spatial metaphor as central to the operation of specific family strategies. It is possible to conceive of the sixteen-item scale as an instrument which can be used to measure the extent to which persons perceive their families as engaging in strategies oriented toward a tight or loose regulation of distance among family members. Rather than conceiving of family types as specific classifications within which a family falls, this study provides support for viewing families as establishing themselves along a continuum, depending upon their distance-regulating behaviors.

The exploratory nature of this study needs to be emphasized. New items need to be generated and further factor analyses performed in an effort to discover the underlying structure of family behavior. The results of the study do confirm, however, that such efforts are likely to be rewarding and that, indeed, the Kantor and Lehr model does lend itself to instrumentation in family communication research.

APPENDIX A

Behaviors included for both parents:

respects my feelings, even when we do not agree
nags
makes others feel guilty to get his/her own way
is a good listener
makes excuses for him/herself
blames everyone else for anything that goes wrong
exaggerates
teases me until I get angry
assumes she/he knows 'what is good for me' and is wrong
gives me an endless 'lecture' when s/he is mad at me
spanked or slapped me when I was younger
looks on the bright side of things
says things to hurt me during moments of anger, such as reminding me of my shortcomings or past mistakes
calls me names in moments of anger, such as "stupid" or "lazy"
gets angry without telling me what I've done to upset him/her
finds fault with family members
takes 'the blame' when s/he is wrong
'rubs it in' when s/he is right
makes promises s/he doesn't keep
yells when s/he is angry
swears
uses sarcasm
praises me when I've done something well
gives me permission to do something (such as go with my friends) when s/he doesn't really want me to do it and then gets angry or feels hurt when I actually do it

Behaviors common to all three individuals:

respects feelings
nags
makes others feel guilty
listens
makes excuses
blames others
exaggerates
teases
looks on the bright side
says things to hurt others
calls others names
gets angry without telling the other person why
finds fault
takes the 'blame' when wrong
'rubs it in'
makes promises and doesn't keep them
yells
swears
uses sarcasm

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acock, A.C. and V.L. Bengtson. "On the relative influence of mothers or fathers: A covariance analysis of political and religious socialization." Paper presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York, 1976.

Ainsworth, M. Object relations, dependency, and attachment: A theoretical review of the mother-infant relationship, Child Development, 1969, 40, 969-1025.

Angres, S. "Intergenerational relations and value congruence between young adults and their mothers." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1975.

Armstrong, B. and M. Sotzin. "Intergenerational comparison of attitudes toward basic life concepts." Journal of Psychology 87:293-304, 1974.

Bengtson, V.L. "Generation and family effects in value socialization." American Sociological Review 40: 358-71, 1975a.

Bengtson, V.L. and J.A. Kuypers. "Generational differences and the developmental stake." Aging and Human Development 2:249-60, 1971.

Bengtson, V.L. and M.C. Lovejoy. "Values, personality, and social structure: An intergenerational analysis." American Behavioral Scientist 16:880-911, 1971.

Berardo, F. "Kinship interaction and communications among space-age migrants." Journal of Marriage and the Family 29:541-54, 1967.

Bernstein, B. (ed.). Class, Codes, and Control. Vol. 2. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.

Bertalanffy, L. General System Theory. New York: Braziller, 1968.

Bettelheim, B. "The problem of generations." In E. Erikson (ed.), The Challenge of Youth. New York: Anchor Press, 1965.

Borke, H. A family over three generations: The transmission of interacting and relating patterns. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1967, 29, 638-655.

Boulding, K.E. "General Systems Theory -- The Skeleton of Science." In Buckley, W. (ed.), Modern Systems Research for the Behavioral Scientist. Chicago: Aldine, 1968, pp. 3-10.

Button, A. "Some antecedents of felonious and delinquent behavior." Journal of Clinical Child Psychology 2 (Fall): 35-38, 1973.

Campisi, P. "Ethnic family patterns: The Italian family in the United States." American Journal of Sociology 53: 443-49, 1948.

Cherry, L. and M. Lewis. "Mothers and two-year-olds: A study of sex-differentiated aspects of verbal interaction." Developmental Psychology 12:2/8-82, 1976.

Cohler, B. Character, mental illness and mothering. In H. Grunebaum, H.J. Weiss, B. Cohler, C. Hartman, & D. Gallant, Mentally Ill Mothers and Their Children. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975, 234-512.

Cohler, B.J. and H.U. Grunebaum Mothers, Grandmothers, and Daughters: Personality and Child Care in Three-Generation Families." New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1981.

Flacks, R. "The liberated generation: An exploration of the roots of student protest." Journal of Social Issues 23:52-75, 1967.

Gelles, R. "Violence towards children in the United States." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 48 (October): 580-592, 1978b.

Gelles, R. and M. Straus "Determinants of violence in the family: Toward a theoretical integration," pp. 549-581 in W. Burr et al. (eds.) Contemporary Theories About the Family, vol. 1, New York: Free Press, 1979.

Hill, R. N. Foote, J. Aldous, R. Carlson, and R. MacDonald. Family Development in Three Generations. Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1970.

Hirschberg, G. and A. Gilliand. "Parent-child relationships in attitudes." Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 37: 125-30, 1942.

Hyman, H.H. Political Socialization. New York: Free Press, 1959.

Jennings, M. and R. Niemi. "Continuity and change in political orientations: A longitudinal study of two generations." American Political Science Review 42:169-84, 1968.

Kalish, R. and A. Johnson. "Value similarities and differences in three generations of women." Journal of Marriage and the Family 34:49-54, 1972.

Kandel, D. "Inter- and intragenerational influence on adolescent marijuana use." Journal of Social Issues 30:107-35.

Kantor, David, and William Lehr. Inside the Family. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975.

Kerckhoff, A.C. and P. Huff. "Parental influence on educational goals." Sociometry 37:307-27.

Komarovsky, M. Blue-Collar Marriage. New York: Random House, 1964.

Lerner, R.M. and J.R. Knapp. "Actual and perceived intrafamilial attitudes of late adolescents and their parents." Journal of Youth and Adolescence 4:17-36, 1975.

Lerner, R.M. and G.B. Spanier (ed.). Child Influences on Marital and Family Interaction: A Life-Span Perspective. New York: Academic Press, 1978.

Lewis, M. and R. Freedle. "Mother-infant dyad: The cradle of meaning." In P. Piner, L. Krames, and T. Alloway (eds.), Communication and Affect Language and Thoughts. New York: Academic Press, 1973.

Payne, S., D. Summers, and T. Stewart. "Value differences across three generations." Sociometry 36: 20-30.

Radke-Yarrow, M., H.G. Trager, and J. Miller. "The role of parents in the development of childrens' ethnic attitudes." Child Development 23:13-53, 1952.

Riskin, J. and E.E. Faunce. "An evaluation review of family interaction research." Family Process 11:365-455, 1972.

Rubin, Lillian Breslow. Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Satir, Virginia. Conjoint Family Therapy (rev. ed.). Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior Books, 1967.

Streib, G.F., "Intergenerational relations: Perspectives of the two generations on the older parent." Journal of Marriage and the Family 27: 469-76., 1965.

Tedin, K.L. "The influence of parents on the political attitudes of adolescents." American Political Science Review 68:1579-92, 1974.

Thomas, L.E. "Family correlates of student political activism." Developmental Psychology 4:206-14, 1971a.

Troll, L.E., B.L. Neugarten, and R.J. Kraines. "Similarities in values and other personality characteristics in college students and their parents." Merrill-Palmer Quarterly 15:323-36, 1969.

Walters, J. and N. Stinnett. "Parent-child relationships: A decade review of research." In C. Broderick (ed.), A Decade of Family Research and Action. Minneapolis, Minn.: National Council on Family Relations, 1971.